



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-00103

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Incidents Occurring at a Pharmacy 1 January - 22 October 2010

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- disclose information relating to questions 1, 2, 3(b) and 3(c) in full;
- disclose information relating to questions 3(a) and 3(d) pursuant to the provisions of Section 31(1)(a)(b)(c) of the Freedom of Information 2000 (the Act).

Question 1

How many incidents of robbery, attempted robbery or burglary occurred at premises registered as a pharmacy (which may be termed as a "chemist" in location codes) in your area between January 1 and October 22 2010?

Answer

There were 28 incidents related to robbery and burglary offences recorded where the information indicated the offence to have occurred at a pharmacy during this timeframe.

Question 2

How many assaults or violent crimes were committed at a registered pharmacy (or a "chemist") in your area between January 1 and October 22 2010?

Answer

There were 11 incidents related to assaults or violent crimes offences recorded where the information indicated the offence to have occurred at a pharmacy during this timeframe.

Please note violent crime includes offences against the person, sexual offences and robberies.

Question 3

Please can you supply details of each incident above, including:

- a) time and date of reported crime

- b) if suspects were believed to be armed (and details of suspected weapons, e.g. knife, firearm)
- c) whether anyone was hurt
- d) The number of people proceeded against in relation to these incidents, and the type of proceeding that took place (charge, caution etc).

Answer

Please see table below.

The exact dates and times per incident have been exempted under Section 31(1)(a)(b)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act. In order to try and assist you I have provided this information in banded format in the table below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31(1)(a)(b)(c) Law Enforcement

Section 31, Law Enforcement is a prejudice based and qualified exemption. This means that the Public Authority must outline the harm and consider the public interest in disclosure.

Harm

Caution should always be taken where requests are made for information at individual record level. Releasing this level of data could lead to an individual being identified.

Anyone that had been involved in an incident of this nature at a pharmacy would be able to establish whether the matter had been reported to police and if they had not been approached, may be able to take action to avoid detection.

Public Interest Test – Section 31

For Release

To release the date, time would inform public debate and raise awareness of crimes and public safety in such premises and how they are dealt with.

For Retention

People involved in crime in a pharmacy would be able to use this information to know if they had been detected and/or assist them to avoid detection. To provide the exact date and time along with the number of people proceeded against per incident would advise criminals that police have not detected a crime and this may encourage these criminals to reoffend. This may impede the prevention and detection of crime and further. If the public are aware that such information could be obtained through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, it may encourage further crime as criminals would be able to make requests relevant to particular crimes in order to check the data to ascertain if any detection has been made by police.

Decision

Whilst there are valid reasons for release of this information in line with the reasons for and spirit of the legislation, where such a release has potential to impact on law enforcement issues then the information regarding the exact date and time of incidents should not be provided and the exemption should be applied. Providing the exact date and time would allow criminals to identify an incident pertaining to themselves and therefore they would be able to ascertain whether any detection by police had been made – this would be contrary to the functions of police in the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and the administration of justice.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Recorded violent crime¹ and burglary offences where MO information indicates the incident to have taken place at a pharmacy

Northern Ireland

1st January to 22nd October 2010

Please note: This information is based on data taken from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change

For the time period from 1st January to 22nd October 2010 there were **39** violent crime and burglary offences recorded where the MO information indicated the offence to have occurred at a pharmacy. Of those, **28** related to robbery and burglary, with the remaining **11** being other violent offences.

Home office classification	Offence type	Victim Injury	Reported date	Reported time	Weapons involved	Detection Method
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jan-Mar 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		Charge
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jan-Mar 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jan-Mar 2010	0000-0600 Hrs	Stone/brick	
Offence against the person	AOABH	Minor	Jan-Mar 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		Reported to PPS
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jan-Mar 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		
Robbery	Robbery	None	Jan-Mar 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jan-Mar 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		
Offence against the person	Common assault	Threat	Jan-Mar 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Reported to PPS
Offence against the person	Common assault	None	Jan-Mar 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Reported to PPS (x2)
Robbery	Robbery	None	Jan-Mar 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		
Robbery	Robbery	None	Jan-Mar 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		
Offence against the person	Common assault	None	Jan-Mar 2010	1800-2400 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		Charge
Offence against the person	AOABH	Minor	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs	Knife	
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		Reported to PPS
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		
Robbery	Robbery	None	Apr-Jun 2010	0600-1200 Hrs	Sharp instrument	

Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Charge
Burglary	Burglary	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		
Offence against the person	Common assault	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs	Physical force	Charge
Offence against the person	Common assault	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Reported to PPS
Offence against the person	Common assault	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs	Physical force	
Robbery	Robbery	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs	Sharp instrument	Charge
Robbery	Robbery	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Charge
Robbery	Robbery	None	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs	Sharp instrument	Charge
Offence against the person	Threats to kill	Threat	Apr-Jun 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	0000-0600 Hrs		
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	0600-1200 Hrs		Charge
Offence against the person	Assault on police	None	Jul-Oct 2010	1200-1800 Hrs	Physical force	Charge (x2)
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	1200-1800 Hrs		Charge
Burglary	Burglary	None	Jul-Oct 2010	1800-2400 Hrs		

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

¹ Violent crime includes offences against the person, sexual offences and robberies.